



**Herb Kohl Educational Foundation, Inc.**  
**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent



**\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Sun Prairie educator named  
Middle / Junior High School Teacher of the Year**

*Sandra Kowalczyk of Patrick Marsh Middle School to receive \$3,000 from Herb Kohl Educational Foundation*

MADISON—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Elizabeth Burmaster announced that Sandra Kowalczyk of Patrick Marsh Middle School has been named the Wisconsin Middle / Junior High School Teacher of the Year.

Kowalczyk, who lives in Marshall, teaches reading to sixth- through eighth-graders. Her high standards and out-of-class events have helped struggling readers improve their skills, while her inclusion of international experiences in the curriculum has excited and engaged students in reading as well as in global literacy.

Kowalczyk received the news from Burmaster in a surprise award ceremony at her school today. As part of the honor, Kowalczyk will receive a \$3,000 award from U. S. Senator Herb Kohl, through his educational foundation. This is the second year the foundation has supported the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year awards. As of August, the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation has awarded \$6.7 million to Wisconsin educators, students, and schools.

“Sandra Kowalczyk exemplifies our New Wisconsin Promise of a quality education for every child,” Burmaster said. “Most of the children in her reading intervention classes are economically disadvantaged. Parents, colleagues, and assessment results testify that Sandra’s high expectations for every student inspire them to achieve more. Sandra is also a teacher who embodies our international education recommendations, using global literacy to motivate and engage students and to help the children expand their minds and hearts.”

(more)

“I know that the future of this state and nation rests in the hands of our students,” Kohl said. “I support our Teacher of the Year awards because they recognize the work of outstanding educators and help ensure that strong, capable, caring teachers are educating tomorrow’s leaders.”

Kowalczyk has won awards and grants for projects that increase academic achievement and global literacy. She received a Bridge to Understanding Award from the United States Board on Books for Young People for “Wear in the World,” a program that combined art, reading, writing, and geography as students read about and tried on clothes from around the world, learning how clothing in different cultures “communicates messages” in its own way. The Sun Prairie Education Foundation supported “Breakfast with Books,” which targeted reading achievement of at-risk students and students of color by involving them in book talks and other literature-related activities while enjoying nutritious breakfasts.

Before visiting Uzbekistan in 2005 as part of United States-Eurasia Awards for Excellence in Teaching, Kowalczyk collaborated with several other teachers in her school to help students create “culture bags” of meaningful objects and explanations. She brought these for Uzbek children, and returned with similar bags created in Uzbekistan for Wisconsin students. Currently, Kowalczyk is working with Moroccan educators to create collaborative educational projects for students in both countries. This project resulted from her participation in a Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad. Kowalczyk also spearheaded “Celebrating the Creative Spirit,” a school-community art project funded by the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission.

Kowalczyk holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Burmaster will honor Kowalczyk on Sept. 18 during her State of Education speech and awards ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison.

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